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LETTER DATED 20 APRIL 1994 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

As the representative of the State which is presiding over the organs of the Commonwealth of Independent States in 1994, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a statement by the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States concerning the carrying out of a peace-keeping operation in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone, adopted at a meeting held in Moscow on 15 April 1994 (annexed hereto).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and the annex thereto circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Y. VORONTSOV

Annex

Statement by the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States concerning a peace-keeping operation in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone

For more than a year and a half, the conflict in Abkhazia has remained unresolved. Despite the signing on 4 April 1994 of a declaration on measures for a political settlement of the conflict, in which the parties committed themselves to a strict formal cease-fire and to the non-use of force or threat of the use of force against each other, and a quadripartite agreement on the voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons, the situation in the conflict zone still remains complex. Already since the signing of those documents, there have been cases of armed confrontation. The situation threatens to explode, and that could lead to a large-scale outbreak of hostilities.

The documents, which were adopted during the negotiations on the settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict held under the auspices of the United Nations with the Russian Federation acting as facilitator and which had been going on since December 1993, contain a request to the Security Council of the United Nations for the early deployment of a peace-keeping operation and for the participation of a Russian military contingent in the United Nations peacemaking forces. The carrying out of such an operation should promote a solution to the most acute problem - the safe return of tens of thousands of refugees to their homes. No decision has, however, yet been taken to undertake a peace-keeping mission.

The situation in the conflict zone requires immediate action. It is unacceptable that the despatch of peacemaking forces should be postponed.

Reaffirming their commitment to an early solution to the problem of refugees, to respect for human rights and national minorities and to the principle of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia and the guaranteeing of the statehood of Abkhazia, the States of the Commonwealth of Independent States which are Parties to the Treaty on Collective Security appeal to the Security Council of the United Nations to take an immediate decision to undertake a peacemaking operation in Abkhazia.

The Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth express their readiness, in the event that for any reason such a decision is not adopted in the very near future, in accordance with the spirit and principles of the Treaty, which calls for the safeguarding of the peaceful and secure development of the States Parties, to send to the conflict zone, with the agreement of the parties to the conflict, peacemaking forces consisting of military contingents from interested States Parties to the Treaty.

We appeal to all States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States to participate in a peacemaking mission in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone.

The carrying out of an operation by forces of States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States would in this instance fall within the framework of cooperation with the United Nations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter, which encourages the peace-keeping efforts of regional organizations.

All the activities of the States Parties to the Treaty on Collective Security would have to be coordinated with the support of the United Nations and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. An increase in the number of international observers already in Abkhazia pursuant to a decision of the Security Council of the United Nations and their close interaction with the command of the peacemaking forces could play an important role. We would also welcome the readiness of the United Nations to support such a peacemaking operation with additional contingents.